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Ridley-Thomas Applauds Board Support for West Athens/Westmont Community Garden

Los Angeles— In many parts of Los Angeles County, access to fresh fruit and vegetables is taken for granted: oranges, lemons and grapefruit, lettuce, tomatoes, beans and zucchini are staples in a smorgasbord of options for consumers seeking fresh produce.

In many concrete-locked neighborhoods south of downtown Los Angeles, however, options for obtaining healthy produce are severely limited. According to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, only about a quarter of residents who live within South Los Angeles rate the quality of food where they shop as high, and only 13% consume the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. That is why one important component of eradicating such deserts is the community garden: six hundred square feet of cultivated land, for example, can produce 300 pounds of fresh produce per season.

To that end, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas applauds the Board of Supervisors for action taken Tuesday approving a ground lease for the South Central Farmers Health and Education Fund for the sum of \$1 per year. Also, as part of his advocacy for garden, the Supervisor contributed \$40,000 for site remediation, an undertaking that was essential to prepare the site for planting.

The board's decision not only moves forward the development of a community garden in the unincorporated West Athens/Westmont area, it launches the Supervisor's effort to

support local, grass-root interventions to address food deserts throughout the Second Supervisorial District.

“The bounty of community gardens extends beyond its harvests and the produce they provide,” Ridley-Thomas said. “They provide economic, nutritional, psychological and social benefits that ultimately create self-sustaining communities.”

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